Moira Tegler

Period 1

I stood in Betsy’s drive way on that warm summer evening. Betsy was talking to my mom, which meant two things, they where scheming to do something and that I wouldn’t be able to get across to her for a good half hour at the least. My siblings, Timothy and Serena where playing with Betsy’s children, Emily, Dylan and Jack. I stood there, staring out into the woods that surround the back of the house, when Jack, the youngest of Betsy’s children , almost 3, screamed “Moira, Moira.”. He ran over and grabbed my hand and pulled me towards the swing set that they were playing on. I never really liked children. To me, they were messy, loud, sleep depriving, time consuming, annoying, needed way to much attention, and had way to much energy for me. He pulled me to the swings and hopped on the seat, “Moira!? Push me?” Jack said in a confused yet happy voice. I sighed, I wasn’t about to make some little kid upset because I wouldn’t push him a few times on a swing. I had never seen anyone, anything so happy to be pushed on a swing. He laughed and yelled, occasionally swinging his feet to try and go higher.

Jack had some developmental problems when it came to learning, but he was a very smart little boy for his age. His two siblings, Emily and Dylan, both also had some developmental issues. Emily always had a problem with depth perception, and after two grueling years for the family, they finally got an explanation, Emily’s right and left temporal lobes of her brain where not connected, In essence her brain was not together as a whole. Dylan had a hyperactive disorder, much less serious than his sisters condition, but still very noticeable.

My mom finally called me over. I walked over with no emotion. She let me know that it was time to leave and to go get Tim and Serena. I walked back over and brought them back to the car. On our way home I sat in the passenger seat, staring, yet again, out wishing I could be back home in South Jersey. My mom told me that on Tuesday we would be going to the YMCA with Betsy. I shrugged and continued to look out of the window.

I was outside most of Tuesday, walking around the Trappe Shopping Center with my friend Veronica, like we normally did when I was in Collegeville on summer days. My mom called at 3 pm that afternoon and told me that I would have to come home, now. I sighed, gave her some smart remark and hung up. Veronica walked me to the park where we ran on the playground for a few minutes before saying goodbye and walking off in the opposite direction that I was going. When I got home I went straight up to my room. I heard my mom screaming from the bottom of the stairs “Moira Suzanne Kathleen…!”

I couldn’t and still can’t stand when she screams. It sounds like a mix of a parrot skwaking and a bulldog barking.

“We’re leaving, so get ready now, We’ll be waiting for you in the car.”

I put on my bathing suit, a pair of shorts and a tank on top, grabbed a towel and $5 just in case I needed to get dinner at the Y. When I got to the car my mom told me about this program that seemed pretty cool to her. It was a playgroup for children who had disabilities and for those who didn’t, that was held every Tuesday and Thursday. I just looked at her like, why do I care?

When we arrived, we went right upstairs to the room that this playgroup would be held in. I stopped in front of the door, sighed and rolled my eyes. I was going to walk into a room full of children, one of the things I can’t stand more than anything in this world. Betsy saw me and yelled from the one corner of the room for me to come in. I smiled and walked in, not knowing anyone there other than her and her children.

Children of all races, backgrounds, and ages were running around. The room was filled with trampolines, balls, push toys, swings, and all other sorts of things to keep children occupied. I noticed that there really were children of all ages. A woman stood near the mirrored wall holding a baby, while a child, whom I assumed was hers, who looked to be around the age of nine was running up to her, eager to show her a what he found across the room.

Betsy started talking to me about whatever her mind was set on. I dozed off thinking about things that were prevalent to me at the time. It seemed like Betsy was just about to stop talking when a sudden shriek let out across the room which brought me back to my senses. A little boy was yelling because another little child was trying to take a toy away from him. I watched their parents walk over to each other, both apologizing like something seriously wrong had just occurred.

I was standing across the room from the door, when a woman who looked to be in her mid-thirties walked in the room with a little boy, who stopped me straight in my tracks. This little boy was the cutest child I had ever seen, and remember I am not one to say anything positive about children. Something about the way he looked and the way he smiled seem to pull me in. His mother stopped and put him down where he proceded to run for a purple and green ball that was on the floor. I walked over to him and smiled, while he looked up and smiled as well.

His mother seemed to be paying extra attention to him. I told her how adorable I thought he was.

“Thank you so much,” she said. “ He actually has an identical twin, Liam, but he is at home sick right now. This is Levi.”

She went on to tell me about how she and her husband had adopted Liam and Levi from a Southern American country when the boys where still very young. From the start, she said, they knew that both of the boys had a disability. They were at the age when most children started talking and piecing phrases together, yet the boys had their own language which they seemed to speak.

Levi was a ball of energy. His mother was keeping an eye on him, because she was worried that he might also get sick. She did not want to have to deal with a pair of two-year-olds who were sick.

The rest of that afternoon I spent being pulled between Jack and Levi. Levi and Jack seemed to get along well, expecially when they played in a ball pit that was set up. Jack would run to a small slide that was set up and go down, landing in the balls, while Levi was content while picking up different colored balls and handing them to me. Levi seemed distant, although he seemed to be having a good time.

Soon enough, time ran out and it was time for everyone to go home. I watched many of the kids leave with their parents and then Levi’s mother came over and said “Time to go!” Levi looked up, then back down at the balls. Jack was already over with Betsy getting his shoes on to go home. Levi’s mother picked him up out of the ball pit and brought him closer to the front door where they had left their shoes. I followed the two, not knowing what else I should be doing.

“Its time to go Levi. Can you wave goodbye?” he jumped up and down and smiled. “ It was nice meeting you. I hope to see you here again,” his mother said to me.

“It was nice meeting you as well, and I’m sure you will. Bye Levi.”

That night my mother and Betsy decided that we should all have dinner together. She ordered pizza for us all and we sat around outside her house to eat. Emily and Timothy where in the drive way skateboarding, while Dylan, Serena and Jack were on the swing set. Jack kept smiling at me, I didn’t really understand why, but I guess he had grown on me, I smiled back. He ran over to me and smiled, asking I if I wanted to play tag with him and I agreed.

On our way home it occurred to me that in this day, I had decided that I liked these two kids. They really weren’t that bad. These two kids, with all their love and happiness, made me see that there is a positive side to children, my thoughts and ideas where changing. I didn’t know that anything, expecially my opinions, could change that fast.

It had been one full week since my first encounter with Levi, and I knew that I would be seeing Jack again today. We were late to the play group and I really couldn’t wait to come see the kids this week. I walked into the room, but Levi wasn’t there. Betsy told me that most of the people that came in only came every now and then, do to other commitments or personal reasons with the kids. I understood.

This week, a little less than half of the kids were the same from last week. There were new faces and new personalities. I followed a few of the kids around, wohndering if this week any of them are going to like me. None really took a hold of me or found me interesting enough. I stood with my mom and Betsey for most of the time as they talked about their spiritual beliefs. I wasn’t happy with the outcome of this week.

A few more weeks went by, things got tied up in travel and family events. It may have been a good five weeks that I hadn’t gone back to the Y for the porgram. Every now and then Levi would run through my head. I saw Jack every more and more. Timothy and Emily got their class schedules and would be in the same class, as would Serena and Dylan. Our families started spending more time together. It had turned from a little boy who wanted me to push him on a swing, to screaming my name and running towards me to give me a hug when he saw me get out of the car.

The week before school started again, we all went back to the Y. This time we were late, so I was almost positive anyone who would be there, was already there. I walked in the room, and there was Levi, with his brother Liam. They were both playing with a push toy and seemed quite enthused with it. They were running around. I went over and said hi to Liam. He still looked a little confused but smiled back. It had seemed that he remembered me from before. Their mother had came up to me later and said that Levi had missed me, he would come in the room and look around before he would start playing.

These two children have shown me that all people are the same. We all have the same emotions and feelings, no matter what age. I was introduced to a huge amount of young people with disabilities and have learned about how their families were affected by them. These two little boys helped me change my mind on children and allow myself to think of them differently, to give them a chance. Although children are still not my favorite, I have learned from this whole expirience to give more people of all ages more chances.

I still go the the program at the Y every now and then, between work and training and travel. Jack is still in my life and I see him about once every week when his family comes over, or when my family goes to their house. He’s gotten big over the two years that I have known him. Betsy has let me know that the experience has allowed for a greater network of friends of all ages and personalities. Although Levi had a great impact on me, I have not seen the litle boy who stopped me in my tracks and started the change of my viewpoints on children in quite some time.